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**For immediate release**

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# Wyoming Youth ChalleNGe welcomes its third class

CAMP GUERNSEY, Wyo. – The Wyoming National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program's third class began Jan. 21, with 47 candidates enrolled.

This class includes candidates from Albany, Campbell, Carbon, Converse, Fremont, Goshen, Johnson, Laramie, Lincoln, Natrona, Niobrara, Park, Sheridan, Sweetwater, Uinta and Washakie counties.

Youth ChalleNGe is a voluntary program that helps troubled teenagers work toward a high school diploma or GED certificate.

The program begins with a five-month residential phase at Camp Guernsey, followed by 12 months of mentoring, outside of the camp.

Candidates are 16-18 years old, have dropped out of high school, are drug free and free of any felony convictions. They cannot be forced or required by law to enroll in the program, nor can they be forced to stay.

"Youth come into our program to make positive changes in their lives. For many of them this is the first time they have been away from home for an extended time," Lt. Col. Shawn Powell, Wyoming Youth Challenge director, said. "The first two weeks are filled with learning military customs and courtesies, physical fitness, and improving their self-discipline. The youth who stay in the program have the opportunity to complete their GED and improve their life circumstances."

Wyoming State Auditor Rita Meyer will be the keynote speaker when the candidates transition into Youth ChalleNGe cadets, Feb. 2. The transition also marks the start of academic courses and opportunities to serve in Wyoming communities.

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